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MSHA issues preliminary mine safety data for 2013

ARLINGTON, Va. – The U.S. Department of Labor’s Mine Safety and Health Administration today released preliminary data for calendar year 2013, updating the [“Mine Safety and Health at a Glance”](#) page. The charts include information on inspections; violations; number of mines and miners; and fatality and injury rates for coal, metal and nonmetal, and all mining.

The data show that while the 2013 overall injury rate improved from the prior year to an historic low, fatality rates increased, driven by a high number of mining deaths in the 4th quarter of 2013 when 15 miners died. In total, there were 42 mining deaths in 2013. Of those 42, 20 occurred at coal mines (unchanged from the previous year) and 22 at metal and nonmetal mines, an increase of six from the previous year. Nine of the metal and nonmetal 22 deaths occurred in the 4th quarter.

In general, mining fatality and injury rates have been on a downward trend. 2011 recorded historic low fatality and injury rates. 2012 fatal and injury rates fell even lower, followed by fiscal year 2013, with the lowest rates ever recorded.

For all mining, the preliminary 2013 fatal injury rate was 0.132 per 200,000 hours worked, an increase from 2012. The overall injury rate of 2.46 per 200,000 hours was a record low. For coal mining, the preliminary 2013 fatal injury rate was slightly higher than 2012, at .0176 fatal injuries per 200,000 hours worked. The overall injury rate of 3.08 per 200,000 hours was a record low. For metal and nonmetal mining, the fatal injury rate increased to .0108 per 200,000 hours worked. The overall injury rate of 2.11 per 200,000 hours worked was a record low.

The number of deaths of mine contractors dropped to a record low as well, with a total of four fatalities, compared to five the previous year. The fatal injury rate for contractors dropped to .0061.

For the third consecutive year, mining industry compliance continued to improve. Inspectors issued 118,759 citations and orders in 2013, a 15 percent decline from the prior year.

“MSHA has implemented a number of actions to improve compliance, and it shows,” said Joseph A. Main, assistant secretary of labor for mine safety and health. “The mining deaths, however, particularly in the 4th quarter of 2013, make clear that more needs done to protect our nation’s miners.”

MSHA actions include: the special impact inspection initiative targeting troubled mines, the revised [Pattern of Violations](#) enforcement program to rein in chronic violators, the [Rules to Live By](#) initiative designed to prevent common types of mining deaths, and new [examination rules](#) requiring underground coal mines to “find and fix” hazards during mine examinations. Several stakeholder initiatives, such as improved [guidance on guarding of equipment](#) and [fall protection](#) at metal and nonmetal mines, have also led to significant improvements.

The number of mines in operation decreased slightly in 2013, from 14,093 to 13,708. The number of working miners also declined, from 387,878 to 374,069. MSHA will release a final version of the calendar year data in July.

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